

IMPORTANT NOTE

From **OCTOBER** onwards the club's **General Meetings** will be held in the **Newborough Uniting Church Hall** which is located at the corner of Old Sale Rd and Chamberlain Rd, entry from Chamberlain Rd.

DIRECTIONS FOR UNITING CHURCH HALL

After leaving the highway at the Newborough exit drive straight ahead through the traffic lights (John Field Drive) then 1km to the next set of lights where you turn **RIGHT** (Old Sale Rd). At the third crossing of the median strip do a U-turn to get back to Chamberlain Rd. Turn **LEFT**, and the entry to the Church grounds, off-street parking and the hall is the **FIRST** drive on the **LEFT**.

ALTERNATIVE DIRECTIONS FOR UNITING CHURCH HALL

After leaving the highway at the Newborough exit turn **RIGHT** at the traffic lights and then **LEFT** into Monash Rd. At Old Sale Rd turn **LEFT**, then **LEFT** into Chamberlain Rd. The entry to the Church grounds, off-street parking and the hall is the **FIRST** drive on the **LEFT**.

SECOND IMPORTANT NOTE

Meeting dates for this month – General Meeting 31 August, Excursion 1 September

LICHEN AT URALLA NATURE RESERVE

Saturday July 23rd saw a group of 13 Latrobe Field Naturalists head out in cold but (mostly!) dry weather to the Uralla Nature Reserve in Trafalgar. The group was “lichen hunting” with Simone leading the group. The advantage of looking for lichens is that they are very accommodating and sit still so you can admire them to your heart's content.

We didn't need to move far until we came across the first lichen site. It was an old Eucalypt tree stump, which was richly covered by representatives of the lichen family Cladoniaceae (green). The primary squamules (individual scales, a few mm

across) of *Cladonia rigida* spread over much of the surface. Podetia (stalks) were growing out from these, some bearing apothecia (fruiting structures) that were rounded and brown. Other Cladoniaceae members seen on this trunk included *Thysanothecium scutellatum*, which forms inconspicuous little (up to 5 mm high) “umbrellas”. There were two *Cladia* species too; *C. aggregata* being the most common and forming a richly branched, spreading network of hollow, intertwined podetia. The latter are much more robust and “tree-like” when they are fertile, which can be noted by the black spots at the tips of the podetia. *C. schizopora* is much more difficult to spot as the primary thallus forms a leprose (powder-like) layer over the trunk. In addition, the stalks of the podetia are almost exactly the same colour and only 2-3 mm tall. You can normally pick them out though by the black apothecia at the tips.

A little further along we found representatives of the Parmeliaceae on a Blackwood tree. These included *Punctelia subrudecta* (foliose), which is green with white dots on the upper surface and a pale lower surface that grows closely attached to the bark. We also saw two species of *Parmotrema* (foliose, green-grey) that were both attached to the bark quite loosely and are distinguished most easily from each other by their secondary chemistry. It is handy to carry small quantities of 10% potassium hydroxide solution (K) and a plain bleach solution (C) in dropper bottles. These can be used on the medulla (middle part of the lichen) to get an idea of the chemical compounds that may be present. *Parmotrema perlatus* is smooth and has a positive yellow reaction with K on the medulla (written as K⁺ yellow) whereas *P. reticulatum* has a network of cracks covering the upper surface and has a K⁺ yellow turning red reaction. We also saw *Usnea oncodeoides* (fruticose), which forms tufts or strands and is attached to the substratum by a central holdfast and *Ramalina celastri*, which looks similar but is flattened (a little like short shoelaces) and is in the Ramalinaceae. A crustose lichen common on Blackwood was *Megalania grossa*, which usually has a white or olive, crustlike thallus that forms a blotch on the bark and has black dots for apothecia.

Moving along very slowly (someone commented even Botanists were fast

compared to us!) we came to a large old Messmate Stringybark, which had small patches of *Pannoparmelia wilsonii* (Parmeliaceae) on it. This species is small and yellow with isidia (fingerlike vegetative outgrowths) and is attached to the bark by small brown/black “cushions”. On this tree we also saw *Hypogymnia physodes* (Parmeliaceae), which is squishy and hangs loosely from the substratum, grey/white on the upper surface and black under.

After much coaxing the group managed to make it all the way to the end of the boardwalk into the wet gully where *Pittosporum*, *Olearia*, *Pomaderris*, *Eucalypts*, Ferns and Wonga Vine were “dripping” with cryptogams. In this more shaded part of the forest we came across the cyanolichens (lichens containing cyanobacteria – blue-green algae as their photobiont). *Peltigera dolichorhiza* (Peltigeraceae) is leaden grey with apothecia on upturned lobes, resembling “horns” and a white lower surface with rope-like rhizines (root hairs) attaching it to the bryophytes and rock. The brown/black *Collema* (Collemataceae) is almost translucent as it lacks a cortex and is very thin. It grew on the Wonga Vine where it formed small but plentiful tufts. Also on the Wonga Vine was *Pseudocyphellaria neglecta* (Lobariceae) a Gondwanan relict and always a pleasure to find. The genus is recognised by the small dots on the lower surface, which have tufts of medullary hyphae poking through.

There were plenty more lichens seen; *Menegazzia*, *Pertusaria*, *Chrysothrix*, *Baeomyces*, *Psoroma*, *Flavoparmelia* and *Heterodermia*, just to name a few. No doubt there are many more, either too small or too well camouflaged to be seen by us on this particular trip. Perhaps Uralla Nature Reserve can be next on the list of lichen surveys in this region...?

LICHEN WORKSHOP

Following the fieldtrip to Uralla Nature Reserve the lichen group went to Trafalgar Secondary College where we were able to use their Science Labs to look at lichens under the stereo (dissecting) microscopes. People worked in pairs as we attempted to identify a number of lichens. The “Key to the genera of Australian Macrolichens” by McCarthy and Malcolm (2004) is a useful way to identify specimens to genus level and is accessible online as a pdf file.

(<http://www.anbg.gov.au/abrs/lichenlist/Macrolichens.pdf>). The key worked quite well although it is always difficult to get used to new jargon: fruticose, foliose, apothecia, podetia, isidia, soredia.... and so on! Everyone soldiered on though and managed to key out some of the unidentified workshop specimens as belonging to the genera *Cladonia*, *Pseudocyphellaria*, *Usnea* and *Flavoparmelia*, a pretty good effort.

At 3.30 everyone decided that their brains were saturated and it was time to pack up. Many hands made light work and many thanks to everyone for helping to tidy up the lichen mess left behind. Hopefully the fieldtrip and workshop has shown that YES, lichens can be hard to identify BUT many have quite distinguishing characters and it really doesn't take long before you start to recognise them. Here is an idea for some common names (yes I know it isn't scientific but so much easier to remember). Please feel free to add some favourites of your own! If you are interested in coming along on another lichen trip, please contact Ken. There is usually a trip to Morwell NP every other Friday morning.

Some suggestions for common names for lichens

Little Horns - <i>Peltigera</i>	Old Man's Beard - <i>Usnea</i>
Shoe Laces - <i>Ramalina celastri</i>	White Pimples - <i>Pertusaria gibberosa</i>
Forest Sponge - <i>Cladia aggregata</i>	Chimney Stacks - <i>Cladonia</i>
Trumpets - <i>Ramalina inflata</i>	Yellow Leather - <i>Flavoparmelia rutidota</i>
Holepunch Lichen - <i>Menegazzia</i>	Yellow Powder - <i>Chrysothrix candelaris</i>

Simone Louwhoff

LEADBEATER'S POSSUM

Tamara Leitch, who recently joined the LVFNC, is a field ecologist with Wildlife Unlimited and has spent the past two months working with the Arthur Rylah Institute (ARI) surveying Leadbeater's Possums *Gymnobelideus leadbeateri* in the Victorian Central Highlands.

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The population of this endangered species has been estimated at 2,200 mature individuals (IUCN 2008), however the recent bushfires are likely to have reduced the extent of suitable habitat, and continued logging of hollow-bearing trees adds further pressure. Up-to-date information on the distribution of the species was sought by forest managers to enable future planning.

A small team of researchers contracted by ARI, including Tamara, conducted two nocturnal surveys at each of 180 one-hectare sites (across an area bordered roughly by Warburton in the west, Thomson Dam in the east, Marysville in the north and Neerim in the south). Playback of the possum's call was used to attract animals within hearing distance, as well as the call of the Boobook *Ninox boobook* to elicit an aggressive 'predator-mobbing' response in the possums. A thermographic camera was used to detect presence of animals from up to 60m away, before the species was identified with a torch and binoculars.

The Leadbeater's Possums were present at approximately 30 sites, with 1-5 individuals seen on each occasion, in forests of Mountain Ash *Eucalyptus regnans*, Alpine Ash *E. delegatensis*, Shining Gum *E. nitens* and Snow Gum *E. pauciflora*. All of these trees have bark that peels in ribbons, harbouring invertebrates that form a substantial part of the possums' diet. The possums also feed on the exudates of certain Acacia species, so a wattle understorey is often considered a habitat requirement of the species, but some alpine sites had no Acacia species present. Possums were also found in young regenerating Ash forest, where old trees had been left standing amid the clear-felled surrounding forest.

While survey efforts in this study concentrated on montane forests in the Central Highlands, there is an isolated population of Leadbeater's Possums at Cockatoo Creek, Yellingbo (where the main tree species are Swamp Gum *E. ovata* and Mountain Swamp Gum *E. camphora*), and historical records exist near the Koo Wee Rup swamp (in forest dominated by Manna Gum *E. viminalis*) and at Mt Wills in northeast Victoria. With ever-improving survey methods, it's possible that future work may reveal populations of Leadbeater's Possums existing outside their currently-recognised distribution.

Tamara Leitch

REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETING HELD 23.7.2012

General Meetings & Excursions

Friday 31 August: Tolerable Fire Intervals – Jean-Marc Porigneaux

Saturday 1 September: Sale Wetlands. Meet 10am Lake Guthridge (behind Police Station) or carpool from Traralgon Mexican Restaurant 9.15.

Friday 28 September: Migratory Waders in Corner Inlet – Susan Taylor

Saturday 29 September: Yinnar South Flora & Golden Gully. Meet 10am at ARC building beside park in Yinnar.

Botany Group: Saturday 8 September: Traralgon South Flora & Fauna Reserve. Meet 10am at Traralgon South Hall. Contact: Wendy Savage ☎ 5634 2246

Bird Group: Tuesday 4 September: Bellbird Park then Drouin WW treatment Plant. In Drouin turn south over railway, in 300m take 2nd right into Porter Place, then veer left into Lampard Rd for about 1 km to Bellbird Park. Meet there by 9.30. **If intending to go please contact Alix in advance as she needs to know how many are going.** Alix Williams ☎ 5127 3393, alixw@spin.net.au

Finance – Balances: Cash Mgt Trading A/c \$4029.56. Club A/c \$330.77. Term Deposit \$12,000.00.

Business Arising, Correspondence & General Business

Sound system – Phil is trying different orientations of present equipment.

LVFNC Web page – Phil is in process of preparing excursion descriptions and will include a number of photos.

Meeting room for general meeting – can use LCHS room until September, so start at Uniting Church Hall Newborough in October. Organize to visit after August meeting.

Club logo – Suggest put new logo on back of Naturalist.

Traralgon South Flora Reserve interpretive signs – email from Sam Fenton requesting

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input will be forwarded to Ken Harris.

Expo at Old Gipps town October 14 – will respond that we will have a display.

High Country Plants published by CSIRO – will consider ordering for club when we know more about the book.

Mary Austin 90th birthday celebration to be held at 3pm on Monday 27 August at Ken Harris's. Will hold BM there afterwards around 5pm.

Program Planning Meeting Wednesday 19 September at Lorna Long's, 6pm for tea and meeting at 7.30. Soup provided, bring a plate to share.

SEANA accumulated reserves – have sent out request to members for input on spending. Responses will be submitted by Phil at next meeting.

Yallourn mine flooding – Environment Victoria asked club if we have contacts in Waterwatch who could test water quality in Latrobe River where water is being pumped from mine. John Poppins has taken this on.

Club membership list has email addresses added. Will make available to committee.

Conservation Matters

Yinnar South Reserves DSE planned burns – email from Brett McGennissen, Environmental Planner Latrobe City with information and opportunity to raise any concerns.

Rare and Endangered orchid *Thelymitra hiemalis* (winter sun orchid) found at Traralgon South but eaten by a rabbit. Orchid of State Significance *Pterostylis torvyana* x found at Holey Plains (normally Brisbane Ranges).

Purple Diuris monitoring site at Chessum Rd has been slashed but not Tanjil Rd site. Burgan has been poisoned on some non monitored sites.

GUEST SPEAKER FOR SEPTEMBER
Susan Taylor is the senior Flora and Fauna Officer at the Department of Sustainability and Environment based at Yarram. She will talk about migratory waders in Corner Inlet.

FOR THE DIARY

Heart Morass, Sale Field Trip Saturday 8 September.

WGCMA have invited interested club members to join their field trip. Meet 10am outside the old Sale High School – from Traralgon turn right off the Highway at first set of traffic lights (at Raymond St) and park opposite the motel. More information: Matt Bowler, River and Wetlands Officer, WGCMA, Traralgon ☎ 1300 094 262. Mobile: 0427 831 289

The club is planning to put this area on our excursion list for next year. For some background information about the Heart Morass read on further.

Program Planning for 2013

Wednesday 19 September at Lorna Long's, 99 Chamberlain Rd, Newborough, 6pm for tea, meeting to start 7.30. Soup provided, bring a plate to share.

LVFNC Spring Camp at The Gurdies 5-7 October.

Accommodation at Grantville Lodge. Self-catered, BYO linen, blankets/sleeping bag and pillow. More details later.

Springsure Hill Landcare Group Walk in the Bush Sat 10 November.

The club has been invited to join this activity at Sweetwater Creek Track, which is off Beards Track, Shady Creek – 2.6km up Beards track from Old Sale Rd. Meet at 10am for a 10.15 start, finishing with BBQ lunch at 12.30 supplied by the Landcare group.

Rob & Caroline Gully 0413 347 665

The following is taken from the WGCMA Newsletter, Autumn 2012.

HEART MORASS CELEBRATIONS

The Heart Morass Committee of Governors celebrated the five year anniversary of the Heart Morass wetland restoration project recently.

The restoration project began in 2007 when Field and Game Australia's Wetland Environmental Task Force Public Fund (WET Trust) invested over \$1.1 million to purchase a property which covered 750 hectares of the Heart Morass wetland.

This was followed by the purchase of an additional property in 2009. The property is now 1050 hectares in size and features wetlands, red-gum woodlands and over

eight kilometres of the lower Latrobe River.

Over the past five years the Heart Morass wetland has undergone a remarkable transformation from a barren, saline landscape into a flourishing and ecologically diverse wetland system.

The success of the restoration project is the result of a formal partnership between Field and Game Australia, BugBlitz Trust, Hugh DT Williamson Foundation, Watermark Inc. and the WGCMA.

According to WGCMA CEO Martin Fuller, the project is one of the largest ecological restoration projects on private land in Australia, and has helped to enhance the environmental, cultural, social and economic values of the Heart Morass, which ultimately contributes to the health of the Gippsland Lakes system.

Ideal seasonal conditions throughout last year have helped to speed up the rehabilitation process, contributing to the best ecological conditions seen within the wetland in decades.

Recent surveys by Field and Game Australia and environmental consultants have recorded over 30,000 waterbirds of many species within the wetland.

Notable species including Glossy Ibis, Freckled Duck, Intermediate Egret, White-bellied Sea Eagle and Plumed Whistling Duck have returned to the Heart Morass in great numbers this year. A population of the threatened Green and Golden Bell Frog has also been recorded during monitoring work.

The Chair of the Heart Morass Committee of Governors, David Hawker, emphasised the significant role that volunteers from the partner groups have made to the success of the project.

The Heart Morass has also served as an outdoor classroom for over 2000 local primary school students who have enjoyed hands-on activities as part of the BugBlitz program.

The BugBlitz program provides students with an opportunity to learn about science and the environment through activities which include water testing, fauna surveys and tree-planting.

The property was also opened up to the public for the first time in fifty years at a community day in 2010, which attracted over 300 people to the site.

The committee hopes to hold more community events at the Heart Morass in coming years to showcase the progress of the project and the community and environmental values of the wetland environment and its surrounds.

CRINIGAN ROAD EXCURSION IN JULY

On Saturday 28th July, club member Ken Smith led an enjoyable excursion to Crinigan Road Reserve in Morwell. Our club played a leading role in the establishment of this reserve many years ago, and in recent times Ken has taken a keen interest in its further development as a Friend/member of the management committee.

Here are a few photos of plants in flower spotted during the morning:

Slaty Helmet-orchid, *Corybas incurvus*

Nodding Greenhood, *Pterostylis nutans*

Scented Sundew, *Drosera whittakeri*

Philip Rayment

DOWN MEMORY LANE

Bon Thompson enlivened one of the club's previous camps at Gelantipy by reading the

following poem from O F McHaffie of Park Orchards

LAMENT OF AN AMATEUR BIRD-WATCHER

Oh, for a bird of a brilliant hue,
With distinct markings to give me a clue;
Not just all-over grey like a thrush,
Nor one which darts away in a rush
Ere a chance occurs to adjust the glasses
For a much better look before it passes.

Oh, for a bird with a brighter dot
On forehead, or wing, or any spot;
None of your so-called 'faintly barred',
Which to find in the book is so very hard,
But one with its colour plainly defined,
To refer to the book it's easy to find.

Oh, for a bird for a while to stay still,
To give me a chance to observe it till
I can note its colour, is it yellow or buff?
Till I can take my notes in the rough;
Not one of those birds which quickly fly;
I have lost it again and I heave a sigh.

Oh, for a bird that sits out on a limb,
Not near the trunk where the light is dim;
Not one that remains behind the cover
Of leafy shade till I discover,
And my feelings thus to harrow,
Because I'm looking at a sparrow.

Oh, for a bird which sits low on a tree,
Enabling it to be easy to see;
Not one that high in the eucalypt goes
Where the flowers abound as it very well
knows;
I peer through the glasses, my neck gets a
crick,
I don't know the way to take a trick.